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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2796  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4206  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9967  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001755

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/05/2016

TAGS: PGOV PTER PINR NP

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER KOIRALA HOSPITALIZED WITH PNEUMONIA

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Nick Dean. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

MORE DOCTORS FOR KOIRALA

11. (SBU) Prime Minister GP Koirala was admitted to the Martyr Gangalal National Heart Center in Kathmandu late on July 3 following respiratory difficulties. Dr. Madhu Ghimire, Koirala's personal physician, announced at a midnight press briefing that the Prime Minister had pneumonia in the lower part of his lungs but no heart-related complications. In a subsequent July 4 press conference, Dr. Ghimire said that Koirala's physical condition was improving and noted that the Prime Minister's condition would become clearer in 48-72 hours. He announced that the Heart Center's doctors have advised Koirala to remain in the hospital for 10-14 days. Dr. JN Pande, a senior Indian chest specialist, has traveled to Kathmandu to monitor Koirala's health. PM Koirala's plans to present the government's policy programs for the next fiscal year have been postponed until at least July 9.

COMMENT

12. (C) With the Prime Minister indisposed for the second time in as many weeks, questions loom about his ability to fulfill his government responsibilities--and about who would take over in the event of his permanent absence. Deafening silence greets anyone who asks whether the Nepali Congress or the seven-party alliance is considering contingency planning for succession. To counteract this anxiety, the PM's office continues to feed the media regular updates on Koirala's "improving" condition. The PM's fragile health adds another largely unpredictable complication to Nepal's already convoluted peace process.

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